

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 2074

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS--1

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, PO

SUBJECT: REPORT OF MEETING BETWEEN CANADIAN AAMBASSADOR AND PORTUGUES

PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES

REF: A. USNATO 2041 (NOTAL)

B. USNATO 1744 (NOTAL)

1. CANADIAN DELEGATION HAS CIRCULATED TO SYG LUNS AND OTHER ALLIES
(EXCEPT PORTUGAL) A REPOT OF AN APRIL 9 MEETING BETWEEN THE CANADIAN
AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL AND PESIDENT GOSTA GOMES. FOLLOWING IS MISSION

INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE TEXT OF CANADIAN REPORT:

BEGIN TEXT:

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APRIL 9 MEETING
BETWEEN THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT
AND THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR

THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR BEGAN BY EXPRESSING THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AS COMMUNICATED IN THE CANADIAN DELEGATION'S LETTER OF MARCH 27. THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED CONCERNED PORTUGAL AND NATO, THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS, THE DOMINANT ROLE OF THE ARMY AND THE CONOMIC SITUATION. AS COULD BE FORESEEN, THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR REPORTED, THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT GOMES WERE SIMILAR TO THE REMARKS OF MR. ANTUNES.

PORTUGAL AND NATO

THE PRESIDENT WAS COMPLETELY AWARE OF HIS COUNTRY'S BELONGING TO WESTERN EUROPE ALTHOUGH HE DESIRES TO EXPAND RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH AFRICA. HE UNDERSTANDS CUNHAL'S RELUCTANCE, BUT DOES NOT SHARE IT. HE CONSIDERES THAT IT IS UP TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (WHICH IS TO BE ELECTED DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1976 AND NOT AT THE END OF 1975 AS PREVIOUSLY PLANNED) TO FREELY STATE ITS POSITION ON PORTUGAL'S INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION. HE MAINTAINED THAT, UNTIL THEN PORTUGUESE LOYALTY TO THE ALLIANCE WILL REMAIN FIRM AND ADDED THAT, IN HIS CAPACITY AS FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES, HE HAD ESTABLISHED EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY LEADERS OF THE NATO COUNTRY AND HE INTENDED TO MAINTAIN THESE RELATIONS.

THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

PRESIDENT GOMES SEEMED TO ACCORD SECONDARY INTEREST TO THE ELECTION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHOSE ROLE HE SAW PRIMARILY AS AN EDUCATIONAL ONE FOR THIS PEOPLE "TO TEACH THEM HOW TO USE DEMOCRATIC LIBERTY". WHAT WAS IMPORTANT FOR HIM WAS THE ELECTION OF A LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. WILL NOT THIS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BE THREATENED BY LOSS OF PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY BECAUSE IT WILL BE UNDER THE TRUSTEESHIP OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL? PRESIDENT GOMES MAINTAINED THAT PORTUGAL IS NOT YET READY TO LIVE UNDER A DEMOCRATIC REGIME
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SUCH AS THOSE OF GREAT BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES OR CANADA, BUT HE SAW IN THOSE REGIMES AN IDEAL TO BE REACHED. TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, HE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE: A DRAFT LAW ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND REJECTED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WOULD NEVERTHELESS BECOME LAW IF, PRESENTED A SECOND TIME TO THE ASSEMBLY, IT SHOULD BE VOTED BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY. THE DOMINANT ROLE OF THE ARMY.

ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT GOMES, THE COUNTRY HAD A CHOICE BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND ANARCHY, AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES THEMSELVES RECOGNIZED THIS. THE AFM, HE AFFIRMED, HAD NO PREFERENCE FOR ANY PARTY WHATSOEVER. ONCE A TRANSITION PERIOD OF THREE TO FIVE YEARS WAS OVER, THE MILITARY WILL LEAVE

ADMINISTRATION TO THE CIVILIANS AND WILL DEVOTE THEIR EFFORTS TO THE TASKS OF DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY, EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE, RURAL ELECTRIFICATION, ETC.

THE CONVERSATION ENDED WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION. PRESIDENT GOMES WAS WORRIED AND RATHER PESSIMISTIC, IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREVIOUS REMARKS. ON TAKING LEAVE, HE REPATED TWIC THAT HE WAS COUNTING HEAVILY ON "PORTUGAL'S OLF FRIENDS," AMONG WHOM HE LISTED CANADA. END TEXT.

2. COMMENT: WE ARE UNCLEAR ABOUT MEANING OF "CUNHAL'S RELUCTANCE" IN PARA ON PORTUGAL AND NATO IN CANADIAN REPORT. MISSION ASKED CANADIAN DEL POLITICAL OFFICER (FOWELL) FOR CLARIFICATION AND LATTER OPINED THAT CUNHAL'S RELUCTANCE MAY REFER TO EXPANSION OF RELATIONS WITH THIRD WORLD RATHER THAN WITH EASTERN EUROPE. CANADIAN NEL OFF SAID THAT THIS WAS ONLY HIS PERSONAL INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING TELEGRAM FROM CANADIAN EMBASSY LISBON SHED NO LIGHT ON THIS MATTER. BRUCE

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